

ABSTRACT

An automated self-service mail processing and storing system is disclosed which is capable of receiving input from and providing instructions to a user via, for example, a touch-sensitive screen ~~or a digitized voice system~~. The system is capable of weighing the mail item, receiving user identification information from a credit/debit card, for example, for payment, calculating the charge for shipment and deducting that amount from the user's charge account, and securely storing the item for subsequent pickup. The system contains a novel weighing means capable of detecting minute vibrations for purposes of obtaining an accurate weight amount. The system may also contain a tracking bar code generation means and a tracking bar code verification system. Optionally, a dual floppy disk system allows the user to send electronic mail, and a built-in facsimile apparatus allows the user to send "FAX" information through the telephone line. Also disclosed is a two-way communication means coupled between the mail processing and storing system computer and a remote computer station for providing such functions as credit authorization and charge reporting, transaction and tracking information transfers, error reporting, etc.